



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY

For Immediate Release:

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September 29, 2017

Taneytown Woman Convicted of Theft During Cleanup of 2016 Ellicott City Flood

A 35-year old Taneytown woman has been sentenced to 30 days in jail for the theft of over \$6,200 of jewelry from an Ellicott City antiques store during the cleanup in the aftermath of the July 2016 flood. Melissa Lynn Poole, of the 4000 block of Baptist Road entered an Alford plea before Howard County Circuit Court Judge Timothy J. McCrone on Thursday. An Alford plea is a guilty plea that a defendant makes as part of a plea bargain without actually admitting guilt but conceding that the state has sufficient evidence to convict.

Howard County Assistant States Attorney Natasha Blount told the court that between September 1 and October 20, 2016, the disaster restoration firm, Servpro was contracted by the Ellicott City Partnership to assist merchants in clean up and repair efforts. Poole was a Servpro employee assigned to Attic Antiques 'n Things, located at 8241 Main Street, for several weeks.

Shortly before the store reopened in late October 2016, the proprietor noticed that several items of jewelry were missing, including a \$1,200 Tissot watch. Howard County police investigators subsequently discovered that many of the items had been pawned by Poole at Westminster and Frederick pawn shops between September 21 and October 6.

Judge McCrone sentenced Poole to five years, suspending all but 30 days that she will serve over the next 15 weekends. Upon her release, she will be placed on three years of supervised probation and ordered to pay \$1,200 restitution for the watch which was never recovered.

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